

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 05851 250651Z
ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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S E C R E T CAIRO 05851

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C O R R E C T E D COPY-END OF PARA 1 AND ALL OF PARA 2.

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS EG US
SUBJECT: PROPOSED F-5 SALE TO EGYPT

REF: (A) USDAO CAIRO 211402Z, FEB 78
- (B) STATE 46556, 23019Z FEB 78

1. BECAUSE THE POTENTIAL F-5 SALE IS SUCH RECENT NEWS AND NO INFORMATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED HERE ON PROPOSED CONFIGURATION, WE HAVENOT CONSIDERED IT APPROPRIATE TO ENGAGE EGYPTIANS IN DISCUSSING DETAILS. WE CAN THEREFORE ONLY SPECULATE ON THE POTENTIAL FOR DIFFICULTY.

2/ COMMENTS MADE TO AIRA REPROTED BY REF A WERE QUITE BRIEF. AIRA BELILEVES THEY REFLECT RAYAN'S VIEWS, WHICH CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO PREVAIL IN THE UPPER ECHELONS OF THE AIR FORCE. ALTHOUGH WE KNOW THE EGYPTIANS ARE AWARE THE F-5 IS BEING PROPOSED AS A DEFENSIVE WEAPON, IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW MUCH OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY THEY EXPECT. THEY ARE CERTAINLY AWARE THE AIRCRAFT HAS OFFENSIVE POTENTIAL, AND ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CONFIGURATION OF SAUDI F-5S.

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3. OUT BEST ESTIMATE IS THAT THE EGYPTIANS DO NOT EXPECT AIR REFUELING OR LASER GUIDED BOMBS. THEY MAY HOPE FOR THE MAVERICK.

4. FROM RAYAN'S REMARKS WE DO HAVE THE IDEA THAT THE EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE WANTS VERY MUCH AN F-5 WHICH WILL PERFORM LOW ALTITUDE NAVIGATION AND WEAPONS DELIVERY

ACCURATELY. BASED ON THEIR C-130 DECISION, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE A PREFERENCE FOR LITTON EQUIPMENT.

5. WHETHER I AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL OR A DOD TEAM AT THE AIR FORCE LEVEL EXPLAIN THE PROPOSED CONFIGURATION TO THE EGYPTIANS, WE NEED KNOW HOW THE USG INTENDS TO PROCEED BEFORE SUGGESTING AN APPROACH. YOUR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING THE PROPOSED CONFIGURATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WOULD BE APPRECIATED. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND IDENTIFY THE PROPOSED CONFIGURATION TO THE EGYPTIANS BEFORE IT BECOMES PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE. EILTS

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